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ABSTRACT

A 5-year (1986-91) follow-up needs assessment was conducted to evaluate current single parent and displaced homemaker programs in New Jersey. Suggestions were offered to help them continue effectively helping the changing target population attain long-term economic self-sufficiency. Recommendations made in response to specific findings included the following: (1) taking aggressive measures to motivate single parents and displaced homemakers to obtain a high school diploma or equivalent and acquire marketable skills; (2) using various marketing strategies to create awareness of and encourage participation in such programs; (3) providing female role models in nontraditional occupations; (4) providing prevention programs to discourage teen parenting and parent education; (5) expanding support services; (6) providing individual and group counseling; (7) providing additional services in nontraditional training programs; and (8) developing statewide policies that ensure consistent networking of appropriate services. A cross-sectional descriptive survey obtained data via a mailed questionnaire from 12 single parent and displaced homemaker program sites. The sample was composed of 190 respondents. Findings indicated that over the last 5 years, the profile has changed. The single parent/displaced homemaker was younger, never married, living at or below the poverty level, and enrolled in traditional job training programs. (Appendixes include 13 references, program locations and addresses, and instrument.)
(YLB)

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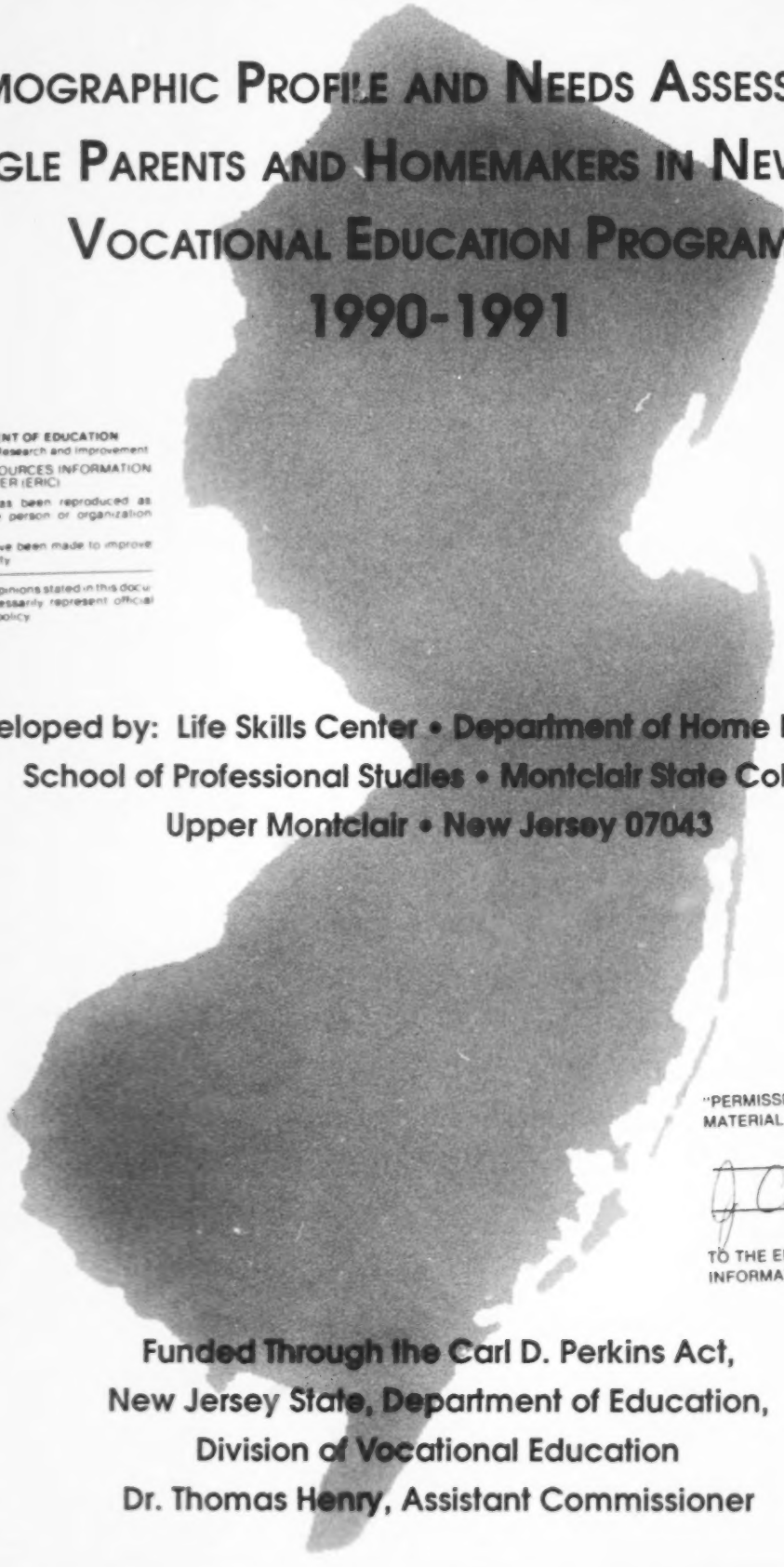
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF SINGLE PARENTS AND HOMEMAKERS IN NEW JERSEY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS 1990-1991



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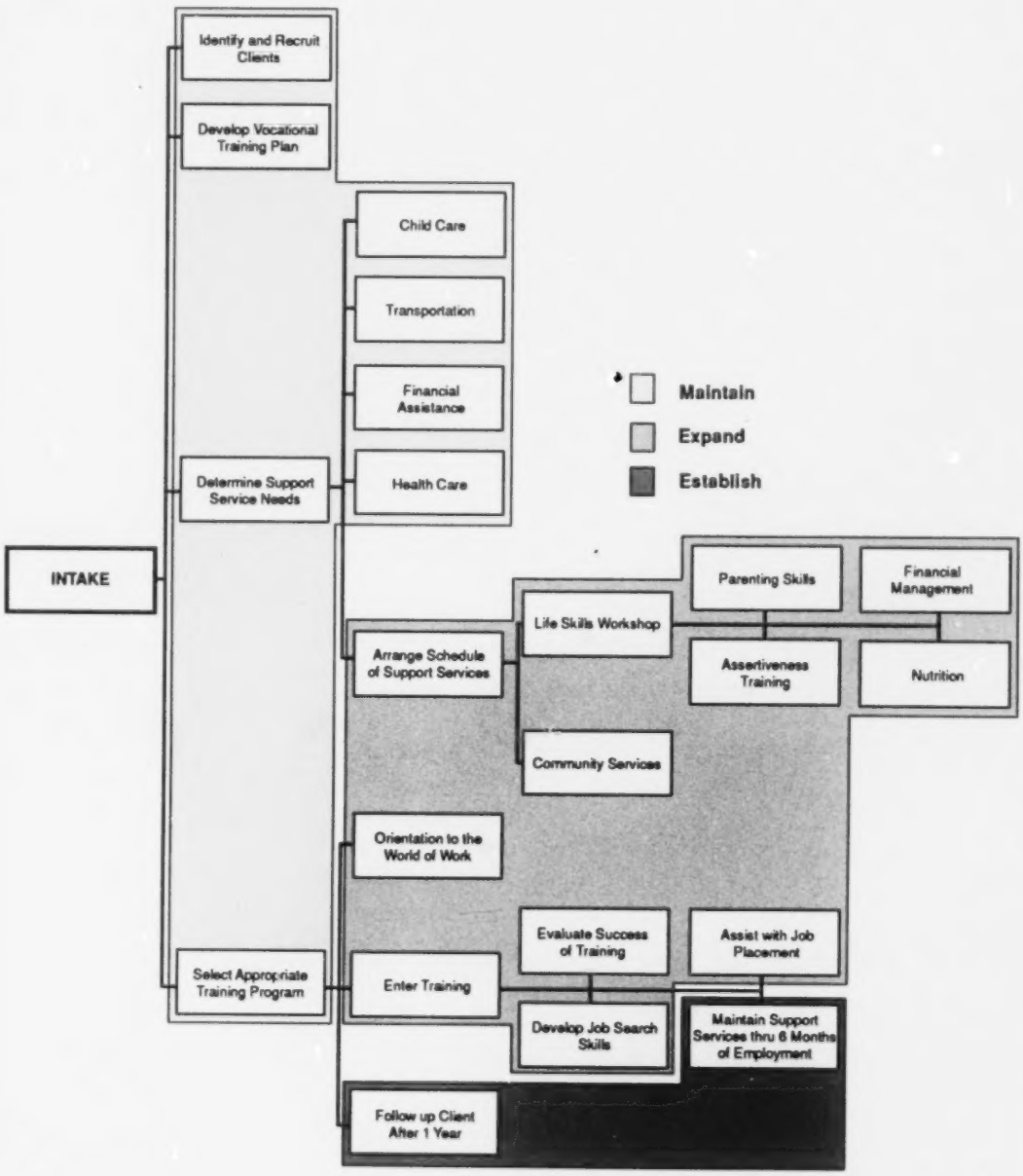
Single Parent and Homemaker Model to Prepare for Employment and Self Sufficiency



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Introduction

There is a longing for an America that no longer exists. Policymakers do not take into account real women's lives. We legislate through nostalgia. Policies need to be developed to help begin alleviating the growing economic plight of the single parent and homemaker. (Osguthorpe, 1986)

The 'feminization of poverty' that has occured over the past decade is still epitomized by single parents and homemakers today. The problems which face single parent families are complex and providing comprehensive services for them is a major social challenge. It is essential to effectively address the critical issues confronting this special population.

Over the last decade several laws have been passed to respond to the needs of single parents and homemakers. State agencies, departments of vocational education and private agencies have provided monies for the development of programs aimed at meeting the needs of these special populations. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, passed in 1984 and reauthorized in 1990 by the United States Congress, has specifically set aside funds to be used in every state to address the needs of single parents and homemakers. Under this legislation, New Jersey for the past several years has had a number of programs for single parents and homemakers which are federally funded and administered by the New Jersey State Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act defines the single parent and homemaker as follows:

Single Parent - an individual who is unmarried or legally separated from a spouse; and has a minor child or children for which the parent has either custody or joint custody.

Homemaker - an individual who is an adult and has worked as an adult primarily without remuneration to care for the home and family and for that reason has diminished marketable skills.

The demographic profile of the single parent and homemaker in New Jersey Vocational Education programs has changed since it was first compiled in 1986. The 1991 single parent and homemaker in New Jersey Vocational Education programs is younger in age, has a lower income, has younger children, less education and fewer marketable skills. Most live at or below the poverty line. However, they are increasingly interested in the higher paying nontraditional occupations which can lead to economic self sufficiency.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to conduct a 5 year (1986-91) followup needs assessment of Single Parent and Homemaker Programs funded by the Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education, in New Jersey.

This study sought to accomplish the following objectives:

- Obtain a demographic profile of participants enrolled in Single Parent and Homemaker programs in New Jersey.
- Identify sources from which participants learn about the Single Parent and Homemaker programs.
- Determine factors which motivate participants to enroll in Single Parent and Homemaker job training programs, specifically nontraditional job training programs.
- Determine the nontraditional interests of participants not currently enrolled in nontraditional job training programs.
- Identify barriers that participants encounter when enrolling and participating in Single Parent and Homemaker programs.
- Identify support services to enable individuals to enter and continue to participate in Single Parent and Homemaker programs.

Trends

Currently in the United States, the increase in the number of households has taken place outside of the traditional family. Today the traditional family (working father, and mother at home with two or more children) occurs in less than one fifth of the families. One of the fastest growing family structures is the solo parent family. Late marriage delays formation of new families and both divorce and births to teen mothers increase the number of single parent households (NY Times, 1991).

Although the New York Times reports that nationally, the number of divorced mothers was up only 1.6% annually in the 1980's, the number of single mothers was up 35% from 1980. This serves in part to explain the increase in the number of young, never married single parents and homemakers represented in New Jersey Vocational Education programs (NY Times, 1991).

Each year in the U.S. 1 in 10 teenage girls becomes pregnant. Each day 40 teenage girls give birth to their third

child. There are nearly 600,000 teenage mothers between the ages of 16 and 19 years of age. The majority of teenage mothers have never been married. They have the highest unemployment rate of all single mothers and often have to rely on family support or federal and state assistance programs (Shaffer and Mahrer, 1990).

Solo parenting is by no means a new phenomenon. Historically, we have always had single parent families, however what is different about the single parent families of today is the appreciable increase in their numbers (Jaisinghani, 1983). Recent statistics indicate that one in every four families with children under the age of 18 is a single parent family up from 1 of every 10 in 1970 (Kerka, 1988). Another new aspect of today's single parent families is that while in the past single parents often obtained considerable help and support from their extended kin, now they perform their role alone. It is important that new external support systems be developed for single parents to effectively perform the family functions of care, nurturance and socialization of children. The problems and challenges encountered by single parent families today are unique and different from the single parent families of the past.

Single parent status may occur due to widowhood, divorce, separation, desertion or non-marriage. Single parent families may be headed by mothers or fathers but the reality of the matter is that there are seven times as many single mothers as there are single fathers (Shaffer and Mahrer, 1990).

The needs of single parents and the problems they encounter vary by the type of single parent status (never married, divorced, widowed, separated, adolescent parent). However, when single parents are viewed as an aggregate group, the following characteristics emerge:

- Single parent families are largely low income families consisting of female headed households with dependent children.
- Lack of formal education and labor market preparation limits access of female single parents to occupations that provide enough income for an acceptable standard of living.
- Single mothers earn an average income of $12,000 a year compared to the $24,000 yearly income of single fathers. Despite the recent strides made by women in the occupational world, the gender wage gap continues to widen. On an average, women earn 65 cents for every dollar that men earn for the same jobs. Women also constitute 65% of all minimum wage earners (Shaffer & Mahrer, 1990).
- An estimated 40% of single mothers have an eighth grade level of education or less and the majority of them work in 'pink collar' jobs (clerical and service fields) which are low paying (Shaffer & Mahrer, 1990).

If any long term program to aid single parents and homemakers is to remain effective, it must be continually assessed and evaluated in order to determine if it is addressing the changing needs of its target population. The Single Parent and Homemaker programs in New Jersey have been regularly assessed (Coté et. al. 1978-1986; 1987;1988-1989) and based on the findings, they have been modified so that they can continue to meet the critical needs of the target population. The present study is a part of this ongoing process.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1

Lack of education and occupational skills are major deterrents to women in becoming economically independent. In the present study, nearly 65% of the participants had a total family income of less than $6000. Approximately 31% had only completed elementary school. (Figures 2 & 5)

Recommendation 1

If the current pattern of the feminization of poverty is to be broken, women must be encouraged and trained to attain economic self sufficiency. Aggressive measures must continue to be taken to motivate single parents and homemakers to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent, as well as, acquire marketable skills. These measures include: enhancing existing programs with creative opportunities for education and training *e.g.* flexitime and flexiplace; expanding services to include all counties in New Jersey; and insuring continued support services throughout training and initial stages of employment.

Finding 2

Highly favorable responses to the section of the questionnaire concerning nontraditional training indicate an underlying interest by single parents and homemakers in pursuing nontraditional job training programs. A majority of the participants (84%) were enrolled in traditional job training programs which usually provide entry into low paying, traditionally female occupations. However, when asked if the respondents would be interested in enrolling in a nontraditional job training program, 72% answered in the affirmative. Also noteworthy is the finding that a majority of the single parents and homemakers indicated that they would be interested in enrolling in a nontraditional program regardless of whether they were the only

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female in the program or one of many. But the verbalized interest of respondents seems to fall short of their actual participation in nontraditional job training programs. (Figure 8)

Recommendation 2

Social service agencies and school programs need to employ a variety of marketing strategies to create awareness and encourage participation in nontraditional training programs. An individualized "person to person" approach is most effective with this population.

Finding 3

In this survey, mothers and female friends followed by male friends were found to be most influential in encouraging participants to enroll in Single Parent and Homemaker programs (both traditional and nontraditional). (Figure 12)

Recommendation 3

- Provide frequent opportunities for informally interacting with female role models in a variety of nontraditional occupations *e.g.* job shadowing.
- Utilize appropriate and influential role models to encourage participants to enroll in nontraditional training programs. (Figure 12)
- Highlight the favorable aspects of nontraditional careers, through a variety of multi-media approaches.

Finding 4

Data from the single parents and homemakers survey in 1990-1991 showed that:

a) The participants are younger (68% of the participants enrolled were under the age of 25 years with 41% being younger than 20 years of age. (Figure 3)

b) Most have never been married (nearly 69% of the participants were in the 'never married' category. (Figure 4)

c) Most were single parents (nearly 79% of them were single parents and several others were pregnant and soon to become single parents). The majority of these single parents had children under 5 years of age. (Figure 6)

Recommendation 4

Single Parent and Homemaker job training programs must continue to provide:

- Prevention programs to strongly discourage teen parenting as there are no advantages and a host of disadvantages to young parenting.
- Parent education and other life skills workshops on an ongoing basis to enable young single parents to successfully balance the demands of work and family.

Finding 5

Unlike in past studies (Coté et.al. 1988-1989, 1987, 1978-86) the majority of the single parent and homemaker program participants surveyed in 1990-1991 indicated that they did not encounter many problems while they were enrolled in the job training program. Apparently this is due to many vocational Single Parent and Homemaker programs now providing a variety of support services for the participants in order to enable them to complete the job training program. However, of those respondents who did encounter barriers, insufficient financial resources, problems with child care and difficulty in scheduling time, were still the most frequently cited. (Figure 10)

Recommendation 5

Single Parent and Homemaker programs need to continue to expand support services such as: child care, accessible and affordable transportation, assistance with scheduling time and financial support (such as paid apprenticeships) during the job training period and initial stages of employment.

Finding 6

Clients enrolled in nontraditional training programs found individual counseling and talking informally with female apprentices were most supportive in motivating them to remain in the program. Organized formal meetings were found to be least helpful. (Figure 13)

Recommendation 6

- Provide individual and group counseling during the process of developing vocational training plans for each client.
- Provide access to female role models and mentors in nontraditional occupations as an integral part of the training.

Finding 7

Participants in nontraditional training programs need additional services in order to accomplish their career goals.

Recommendation 7

Nontraditional programs should include:

- Nontraditional job placement information and assistance
- Preparation for apprenticeship test taking
- Personal counseling and group support
- Long term career development counseling

- Follow up support services during their first year on the job
- Assertiveness training and self confidence building workshops as part of the participants intake process in job training programs.

Finding 8

Although, according to Single Parent and Homemaker program directors, the Department of Labor and local Private Industry Councils are working cooperatively to serve the single parent and homemaker population, the programs are often inconsistent in the services that they provide.

Recommendation 8

Statewide policies should insure:

- Consistent networking of appropriate services to single parents and homemakers.
- Development of strategies to recruit and attract single parents and homemakers and remove the barriers which prevent them from entering training.
- Acknowledgement that long term (more than one year) training usually results in an ability to succeed in a nontraditional, higher paying occupation and climb the appropriate career ladder.

Conclusion

Five years (1986-1991) of researching the single parent and homemaker in New Jersey Vocational Education programs reveals that, it is still imperative for programs to be individualized to meet the diverse needs of the population. At the same time these programs need to continue to be comprehensive so that the varied support services can assist single parents and homemakers to effectively cope with the demands of job and family.

Methodology

Research Design

Given the objectives of the study, a cross sectional descriptive survey design was used. The method of data collection employed was the mailed questionnaire which is one of the least inexpensive and relatively expedient ways of obtaining data. However, the drawback of using the mailed questionnaire is the problem of non-returns which was encountered in the present study in spite of rigorous follow up procedures.

Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument for the present study was a closed end questionnaire adapted from Coté et.al.(1987). The questionnaire that was developed was composed of three sections (Appendix 3). The first section consisted of questions to obtain a demographic profile of participants. The second section included questions about the Single Parent and Homemaker programs. The third section asked questions about the participants involvement in nontraditional Single Parent and Homemaker programs. This section was to be answered only by those who were currently enrolled in nontraditional job/ training programs.

Population and Sample

The population for the study was comprised of 16 Single Parent and Homemaker programs (Appendix 1) federally funded through the Carl D. Perkins legislation and administered by the Division of Vocational Education the New Jersey Department of Education. The Directors of 16 Single Parent and Homemaker programs were contacted and all agreed to participate in the study. Questionnaires along with a cover letter were mailed to each Director of the Single Parent and Homemaker programs with a request that they be distributed to the participants of their centers and after completion be collected and returned to the Life Skills Center at Montclair State College. However, by the due date very few centers returned the completed questionnaires. Aggressive follow-up procedures were used to increase the response rate. These procedures included telephone calls, additional mailings of blank questionnaire forms and a letter from the New Jersey Sex Equity Coordinator to the Directors of all Single Parent and Homemaker programs who had not returned the completed questionnaires from the participants at their centers. All these efforts resulted in an appreciable increase in the response. However, because of time constraints further followup procedures were abandoned and only data received by June 1, 1991 were analyzed for the

present study. The final sample size was comprised of 190 respondents from 12 Single Parent and Homemaker programs (Appendix 1).

Data Analysis

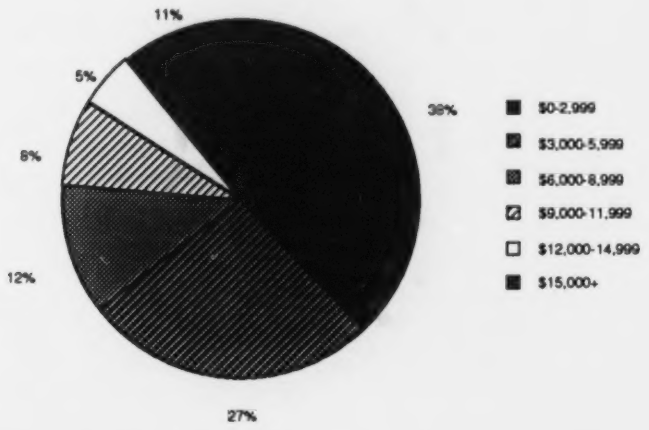
Given the type of data collected, descriptive statistics were the most appropriate to use for data analysis. Percentages, proportions and range are used where applicable along with graphic display of data via pie charts and bar graphs.

Presentation of Data

The following graphs summarize the demographic profile, motivational factors, barriers and support network of clients enrolled in traditional and nontraditional Single Parent and Homemaker programs (1990-1991) who participated in this study.

TOTAL FAMILY INCOME

Figure 2



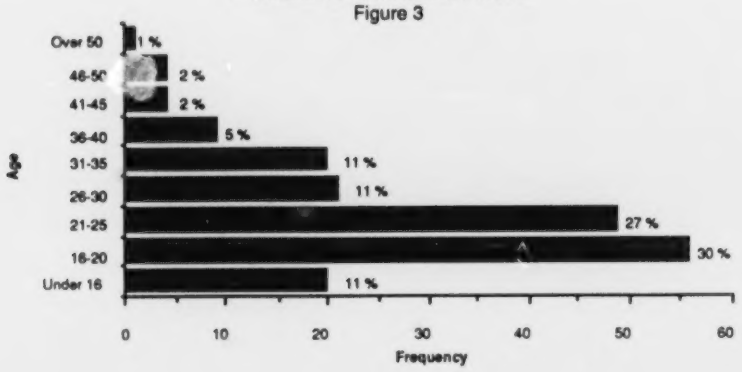
Income level of single parents and homemakers surveyed indicates:

- The majority, nearly 65%, of the clients surveyed in 1990-91 had a total family income of less than $6,000.
- Approximately 24% of the clients had incomes between $6,000 and $14,999.
- Only 11% of the clients reported income over $15,000.

The majority of the clients continue to live at or below the poverty level.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Figure 3

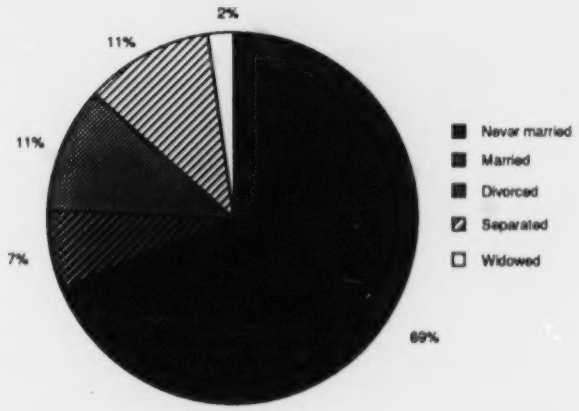


A survey of the age distribution of single parents and homemakers shows:

- Clients surveyed were from 13 to 58 years of age, the majority, 68%, were 25 years of age and under.
- Combining the 26-30 and 31-35 age categories represents 22% of the clients.
- The remaining 10% includes all respondents over 35 years of age.

MARITAL STATUS

Figure 4

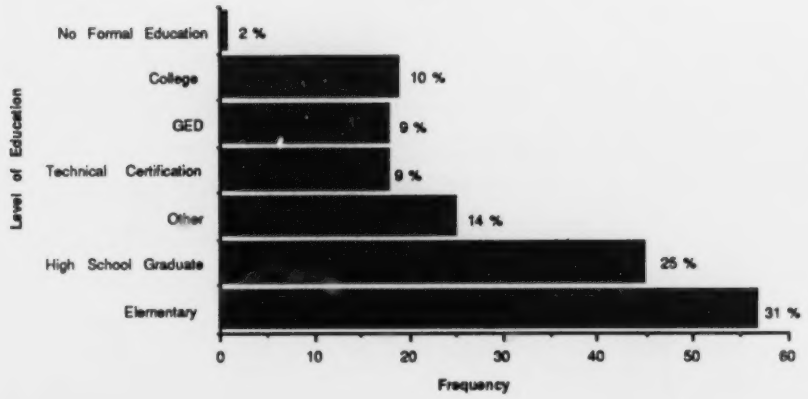


Marital status of the clients surveyed notes:

- The great majority of respondents have never been married (69%).
- Of the remaining group surveyed, 22% are either separated or divorced, 7% are married and 2% are widowed.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Figure 5



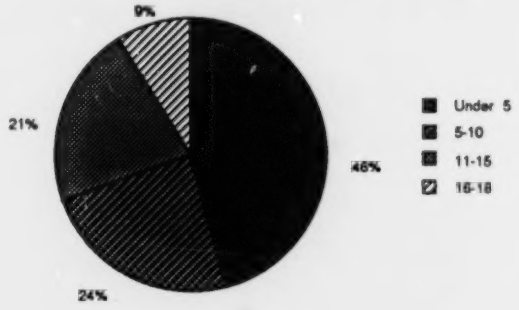
Reviewing the educational level of clients indicates:

Approximately 31% of the respondents had only elementary level (through sixth grade) education.

- Nearly 35% had a high school diploma or its equivalent and 10% of the group achieved this through the General Equivalency Diploma.
- About 9% held Technical Certificates and an additional 10% completed 1-4 years of college.
- Almost 14% of the respondents had checked the 'other category' which included completion of the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth or eleventh grade; trade school, business school, computer training and one respondent had a doctoral degree.

AGE OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN

Figure 6



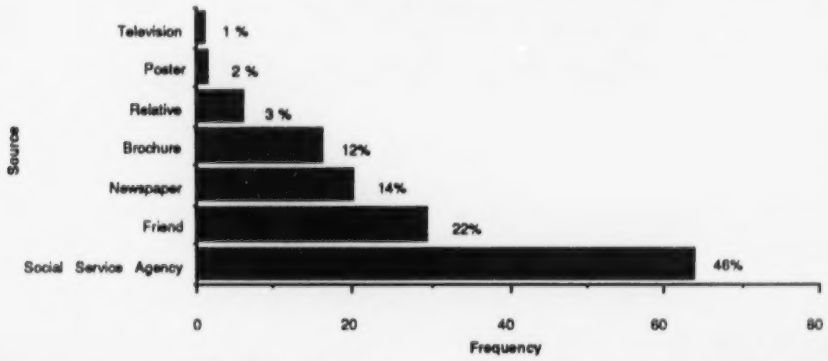
The data on age distribution of respondent's children reveals that:

- Single parents and homemakers with at least one child under 5 years of age comprised 46% of the responses. Of this percentage nearly 22% had two or more children.
- Single parents and homemakers with children between 5-10 years of age comprised 24% of the respondents.

- Single parents and homemakers with children between 11-15 years of age comprised 21% of the respondents.
- Only 9% of the respondents have children between 16-18 years of age.
- It needs to be noted that although approximately 27% of the respondents had indicated that they had no child under age 5, several of them were pregnant, soon to have children.

SOURCE OF AWARENESS OF SINGLE PARENT AND HOMEMAKER PROGRAMS

Figure 7

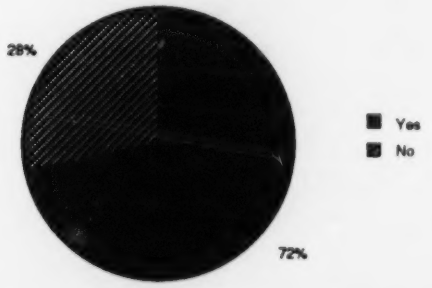


Clients became aware of Single Parent and Homemaker programs in a variety of ways.

- Many of the clients (46%) learned about the program from social service agencies or schools .
- Friends were a source of information for nearly 22% of the respondents, while newspapers created awareness for 14% and brochures for the remaining 12% of the clients.
- The remaining sources, relatives, posters and television were influential for 6% of the clients.

INTEREST IN NONTRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

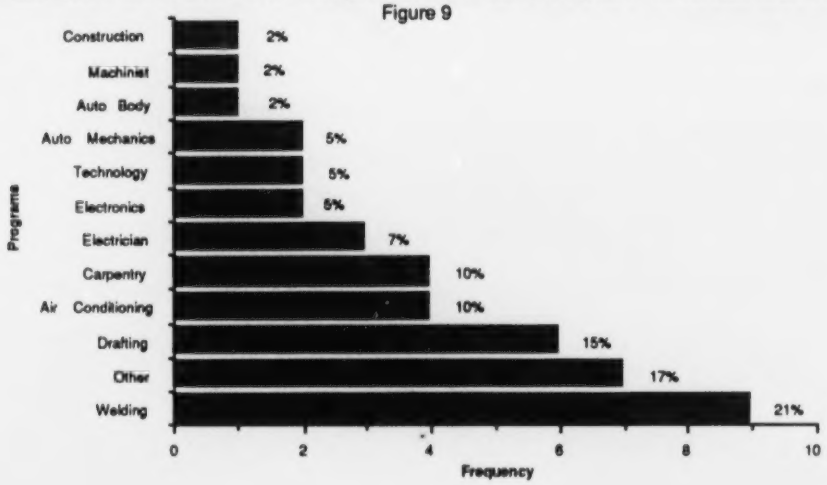
Figure 8



- A majority of the participants (84%) were enrolled in traditional job training programs.
- Those enrolled in traditional job training programs were asked if they would be interested in enrolling in a non–traditional job training program, a high percentage (72%) answered in the affirmative

ENROLLMENT IN NONTRADITIONAL PROGRAMS BY THOSE SURVEYED

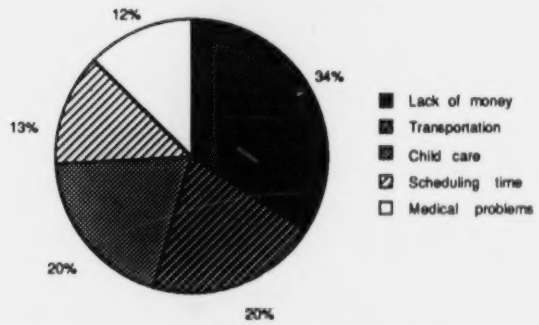
Figure 9



- The two programs in which most single parents and homemakers were enrolled were welding (21%) and drafting (15%).
- The 'other' category comprised of plastics, automated technology and CAD (Computer Assisted Design) accounted for 17% of the enrollment.
- Participation in all other nontraditional programs was marginal.

BARRIERS TO TRADITIONAL/NONTRADITIONAL TRAINING

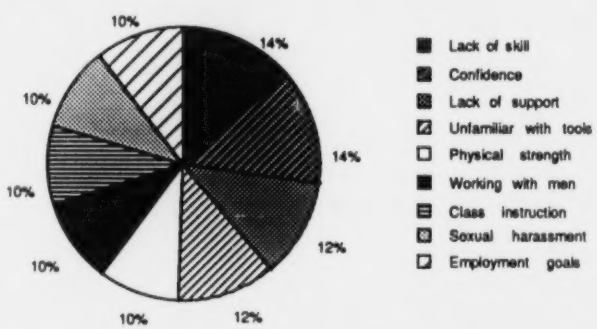
Figure 10



Respondents enrolled in both traditional and nontraditional Single Parent and Homemaker programs, encountered the following barriers:

- lack of money (34%)
- inadequate transportation (20%)
- insufficient child care (20%)
- inability to schedule time (13%)
- medical problems (12%)

ADDITIONAL BARRIERS TO NONTRADITIONAL TRAINING



Additional barriers reported by those in nontraditional training were:

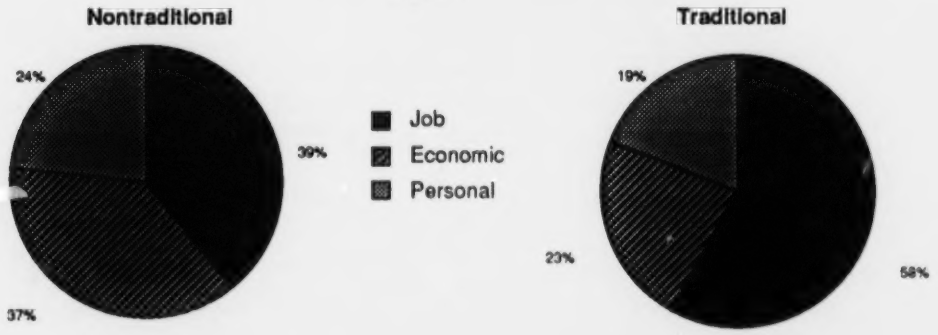
- Lack of ability in required skills (14%) and lack of confidence (14%), were reported equally as significant problems.
- Lack of emotional support via group involvement, networking and lack of

familiarity with tools, each 12%, were also cited.

- Lack of physical strength, difficulty in working predominantly with men, difficulty in understanding classroom instruction, sexual harassment and unclear employment goals were all reported as problems with equal significance (10%).

REASONS FOR ENROLLING IN TRADITIONAL/NONTRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

Figure 11



A clear majority, 58%, of the respondents in **traditional** programs indicated that **job related reasons** were important for participating in a Single Parent and Homemaker program. This was followed by economic and personal reasons 23% and 19% respectively.

The reasons given were:

Job Related
- Job security
- Chance for advancement at work
- Learning new skills
- Interesting program

Economic
- Salary increase
- Economic independence

Personal
- Enhancement of feelings of self worth
- Encouragement by family and friends

In the other category, the reasons most often given for participation were 'to continue education' followed by 'it was mandatory to join'.

Participants in **nontraditional** programs cited job related (39%) and economic reasons (37%) about equally important for enrolling in a nontraditional program followed by personal reasons (24%).

The reasons given were:

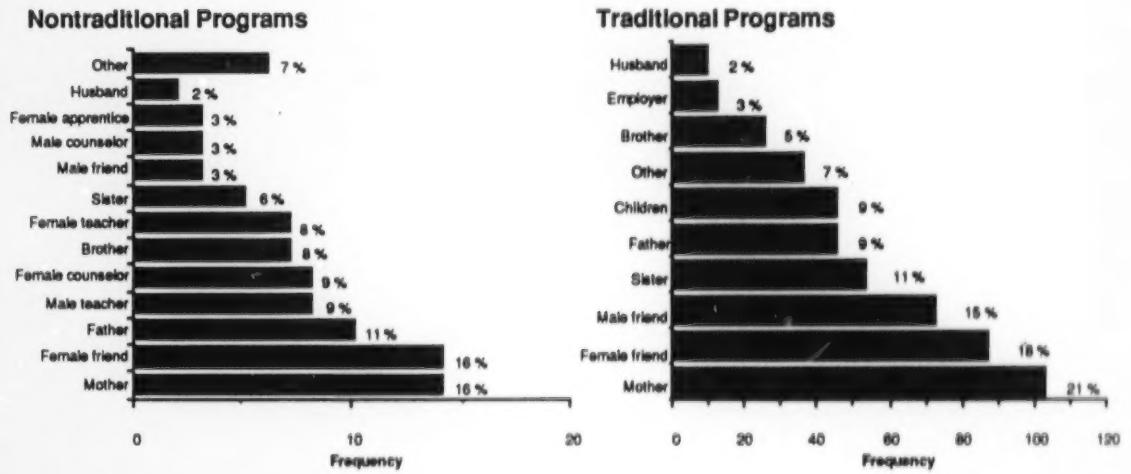
Job Related
- Availability of jobs in the field
- Job security
- Desire to learn a new skill

Economic
- Attractive salary prospects
- Chance for advancement
- Economic independence

Personal
- Convenient work hours
- Counselor encouragement
- Opportunity for recognition
- Interesting program

SOURCES OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THOSE IN TRADITIONAL/NONTRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

Figure 12

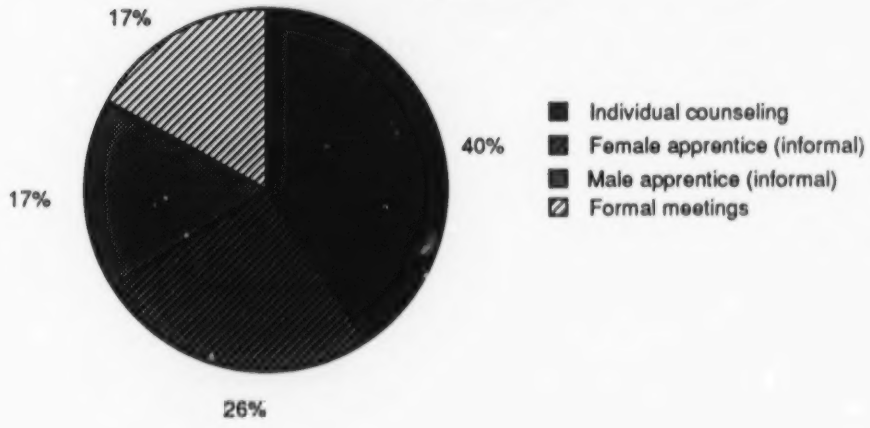


Data on encouragement received by participants to enroll in traditional and nontraditional programs indicates that:

- Participants received the most encouragement to enroll in both traditional (21% and 18%) and nontraditional (16% for each) programs from mothers and female friends.
- Encouragement to enter a traditional program was also given by a male friend (15%) and a nontraditional program by a father (11%). While fathers (9%) also encouraged participants in traditional programs, male friends (3%) did not offer significant encouragement to enter nontraditional programs.
- Sisters (11%) and child(ren) (9%) offered encouragement to enter traditional programs, but sisters (6%) were not as supportive of nontraditional programs. Female counselors (9%) and female teachers (8%), however, appeared to influence participation in nontraditional programs.
- Few respondents viewed brothers, (5%) employers (3%), husbands (2%), male counselors (3%) and female apprentices (3%) as sources of encouragement to enter either program.
- In the 'other' category for traditional programs, the sources of encouragement most often cited were case workers and grandmothers (7%), but for the nontraditional programs the client most often cited herself (7%).

FACTORS FOUND SUPPORTIVE BY THOSE ENROLLED IN NONTRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

Figure 13

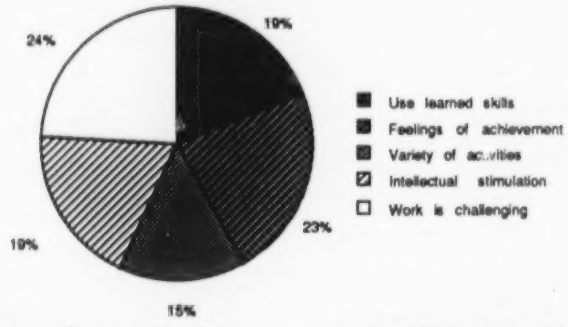


Respondents found the following factors helpful while enrolled in a nontraditional program:

- Individual counseling or discussion with a supervisor was found to be most helpful by 40% of the respondents.
- Talking informally with female apprentices was also cited as useful by 26% of the respondents.
- Talking informally with male apprentices and formal, organized meetings with both men and women apprentices were considered least helpful each with a 17% response.

POSITIVE FACTORS ABOUT NONTRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

Figure 14

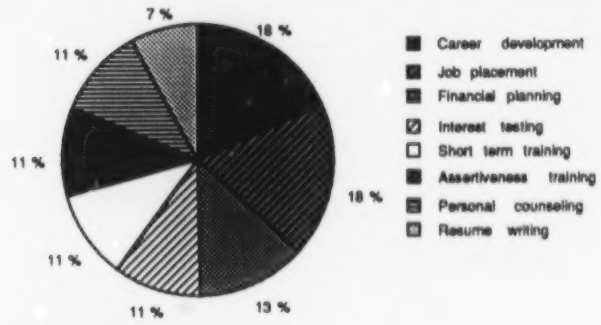


Of the participants who replied to what they liked about the nontraditional training program in which they were enrolled:

- 'Work challenge' (24%) and 'sense of achievement' (23%) were cited as the most favorable aspects of the nontraditional training program.
- 'Chance to use acquired skills' and 'intellectual stimulation' followed, each with a 19% response.
- 'Variety of job activities' accounted for only 15% of the response.

IDENTIFIED NEEDS OF THOSE ENROLLED IN NONTRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

Figure 15



Data on what participants require from a nontraditional training program to help them achieve their career goals in a nontraditional field showed the most important needs to be:

- Long-term career development, nontraditional job placement information and assistance, each with an 18% response, followed by
- Financial information and assistance with 13% of participants responding.

Other needs equally expressed with an 11% response in each category were:

- Testing for capabilities and interests
- Short term job skill training
- Assertiveness training
- Personal counseling and group support
- Some respondents (8%) expressed the need for assistance in resume writing.

Summary

The underlying purpose of this study was to evaluate current Single Parent and Homemaker programs and offer suggestions so that these programs continue to effectively help the target population attain long term economic self sufficiency. To fulfill the various specific objectives, a cross sectional descriptive survey was undertaken. Data were obtained via a mailed questionnaire from 12 Single Parent and Homemaker program sites in New Jersey. The sample size was comprised of 190 respondents. The findings of this study indicate that over the last five years of research on the single parent and homemaker population serviced by job training programs (through the Carl D. Perkins legislation), the profile has changed and the single parent and homemaker now is:

- Younger (under age 25)
- Single 'never married' (66%)
- Living at or below the poverty level
- Enrolling in traditional job training programs

Limitations of the Study

Following are the limitations of the study:

1. The sample was limited to only those participants who were enrolled in Single Parent and Homemaker programs from January 1991 - May 1991.
2. It used a non-probability sampling method and included only those participants to whom the questionnaires were distributed by the program directors.
3. It was comprised of only those participants who voluntarily completed all sections of the questionnaire and returned the data collection instrument by the deadline date.

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Appendix 1

Locations of Single Parents and Homemakers Programs

Appendix 2

Single Parents and Homemakers Programs in New Jersey 1990-1991

Bayonne Public Schools
Avenue A and 29th Street
Bayonne, NJ 07002

Bergen County Vocational
Technical School
Career Development Center
280 Hackensack Avenue
Hackensack, NJ 07601

•Brookdale Community College
Community Service Division
Newman Springs Road
Lincroft, NJ 07738

•Elizabeth Board of Education
500 North Broad Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07207

•Gloucester County Vocational
Technical School
Tanyard Road, Box 1186
Sewell, NJ 08080

•Jersey City Public Schools
346 Claremont Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07305

Jersey City State College
Women's Center
2039 Kennedy Boulevard
Jersey City, NJ 07305

•Mercer County Vocational
Technical School
1085 Old Trenton Road
Trenton, NJ 08690

•Middlesex County Vocational Technical High Schools
112 Rues Lane
East Brunswick, NJ 08816

•Monmouth County Vocational School District
P.O. Box 191
2 Bucks Lane
Marlboro, NJ 07746

Morris County Vocational
Technical School
400 East Main Street
Denville, NJ 07834

•Salem County Vocational
Technical School
RD #2 Box 350
Woodstown, NJ 08098

•Somerset County Vocational
Technical School
P.O. Box 6350
North Bridge & Vogt Drive
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

•Sussex County Vocational
Technical School
P.O. Box 322
Sparta, NJ 07871

•Union County Vocational
Technical School
1776 Raritan Road
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

•Trenton Public Schools
Trenton Board of Education
108 N. Clinton Avenue

The Montclair State
LIFE SKILLS CENTER

SINGLE PARENT/HOMEMAKER
PARTICIPANT SURVEY: 1990-1991

The Life Skills Center of Montclair State College, in cooperation with the New Jersey Division of Vocational Education, is continuing the study of the single parents and homemakers in New Jersey.

We would appreciate your help in filling out the following questionnaire. The purpose of this study is to further assist the Division of Vocational Education in serving your needs.

CONFIDENTIAL: The results of this survey will be used for counseling and evaluation purposes only.

This questionnaire is divided into 3 parts.

The first part asks general background questions and is to be answered by everyone.

The second part asks questions about the Single Parent/Homemaker Program.

The last part asks questions about your involvement in Nontraditional Single Parent/Homemaker Programs and is only to be answered by those currently enrolled in a program at this time.

For this study a nontraditional job/training program for women is one in which most of the workers are men and a nontraditional job/training program for men is one in which most of the workers are women.

Example:

Nontraditional Programs for Men	Nontraditional Programs for Women
Secretary	Construction worker
Nurse	Police Officer
Cosmetologist	Mechanic

Part I
DIRECTIONS: Everybody answers this part.

1. In which county do you live?

   _____

2. Your sex (Circle number of answer)

   1. Female
   2. Male

3. Indicate your present age.

   _____years old

4. What is your present marital status? (Circle number of answer)

   1. never married
   2. married
   3. divorced
   4. separated
   5. widowed

5. If you are divorced, separated or widowed, how many years have you been so?

   _____years

6. Are you presently a single parent? (Circle the number of answer)

   1. No
   2. Yes

7. If you are a single parent, how long have you been so?

   _____years

8. Number of children you have in each age group.
   (If none, write "0" before each)
   Number of children
   _____under 5 years
   _____5-10 years
   _____11-15 years
   _____16-18 years

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9. Which is the highest level of education that you have completed? (Circle number of answer)

1. No formal education
2. GED (General Ed. Diploma)
3. Elementary (grade school)
4. High school diploma
5. Technical certificate
6. College-number of years_____
7. Other (specify)_____

10. Which of the following categories best describes your total family income during the past 12 months? (Circle number of answer)

1. $0-2,999
2. $3,000-5,999
3. $6,000-8,999
4. $9,000-11,999
5. $12,000-14,999
6. $15,000 and above

PART II

DIRECTIONS: Everybody answers this part.

1. From which source(s) did you hear about the Single Parent/Homemaker Program? (Circle the number of all that apply).

1. Brochure
2. Friend
3. Newspaper
4. Poster
5. Radio
6. Relative
7. Social Service Agency
8. Television
9. Other (please specify)_____

Please continue to next page

2. Why did you choose to enroll in a Single Parent/Homemaker Program? (Circle the number of all that apply)

1. Chance for advancement at work
2. Economic independence
3. Family or friends convinced me
4. Feeling of self worth
5. Job security
6. Learn new skills
7. Program sounded interesting
8. Salary increase
9. Other (please specify)_____

3. Circle the number which best describes the level of encouragement you received from each of the following in your decision to enter the Single Parent/Homemaker Program.

	Encouraged	No Influence	Discouraged
Mother	1	2	3
Father	1	2	3
Husband	1	2	3
Brother(s)	1	2	3
Sister(s)	1	2	3
Child (ren)	1	2	3
Male friend (s)	1	2	3
Female friend (s)	1	2	3
Employer	1	2	3
Other (specify)_____	1	2	3

4. Have you experienced any of the following problems while enrolled in the Single Parent/Homemaker Program? (Circle the number of all that apply).

1. Childcare
2. Difficulty in understanding classroom instruction/assignment
3. Lack of emotional support via group involvement and networking
4. Lack of money
5. Lack of motivation
6. Lack of confidence
7. Medical problems-self
8. Medical problems-family
9. Negative attitudes of family and friends
10. Scheduling time to attend classes
11. Transportation
12. Other (Please specify)_____

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5. Are you currently enrolled in a nontraditional job training program? (Circle number of answer)

1. Yes
2. No

If your response to Question 5 is 'No' go on to answer Questions 6 and 7 ONLY.

If your response to Question 5 is 'Yes' skip questions 6 and 7 and go on to answer PART III.

6. If you are presently not enrolled in a nontraditional training program, would you sign up for one? (Circle number of answer)

1. Yes
2. No

7. If you would enroll in a nontraditional training program, answer each of the following. (Circle number of answer)

	YES	NO
If you were the only female?	1	2
If there were one or two other females?	1	2
If there were a number of other females?	1	2
If you talked to a female worker in the field?	1	2
If a counselor encouraged you to "give it a try"?	1	2

PART III

DIRECTIONS: ONLY those in nontraditional programs answer this part.

1. Which of the following nontraditional training programs are you currently enrolled in: (Circle the numbers of all that apply)

	YES	NO
1. air conditioning	1	2
2. auto body	1	2
3. auto mechanics	1	2
4. carpentry	1	2
5. construction	1	2
6. drafting	1	2
7. electrician	1	2
8. electronics	1	2
9. machinist	1	2
10. technology	1	2
11. welding	1	2
12. other (specify)_____	1	2

Please continue to next page

2. Circle the number which best describes the level of encouragement you received from each of the following in your decision to enter a nontraditional Single Parent/Homemaker program.

	Encouraged	No Influence	Discouraged
Mother	1	2	3
Father	1	2	3
Husband	1	2	3
Brother(s)	1	2	3
Sister(s)	1	2	3
Male friend(s	1	2	3
Female friend(s)	1	2	3
Male teacher(s)	1	2	3
Female teacher(s)	1	2	3
Male counselor(s)	1	2	3
Female counselor(s)	1	2	3
Male apprentices	1	2	3
Female apprentices	1	2	3
Other (specify)_____	1	2	3

3. Why did you choose to enroll in a nontraditional Single Parent/Homemaker Program? (Circle the number of all that apply)

1. Attractive salary prospects
2. Availability of jobs in the field
3. Chance for advancement at work
4. Convenient work hours
5. Counselor convinced me to enroll
6. Desire to learn a new skill
7. Desire to work with people
8. Economic independence
9. Job security
10. Opportunity for recognition
11. Program sounded interesting
12. Other (specify)_____

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4. Have you experienced any of the following problems while enrolled in the nontraditional Single Parent/Homemaker Program? (Circle number of all that apply)

1. Difficulty in understanding classroom instruction/assignment
2. Difficulty in working predominantly with men
3. Lack of ability in skills required
4. Lack of confidence
5. Lack of emotional support via group involvement and networking
6. Lack of familiarity with tools
7. Lack of motivation
8. Lack of physical strength
9. Male apprentices having difficulty working with female apprentices
10. Negative attitudes of family and friends
11. Sexual harassment
12. Supervisor(s) having difficulty working with female apprentices
13. Teacher(s) having difficulty working with female apprentices
14. Unclear employment goals
15. Other (specify)_____

5. What do you like about the nontraditional training program you are enrolled in? (Circle the number of all that apply)

1. Chance to use my skills
2. Sense of achievement
3. Variety of activities
4. Stimulation
5. Work challenge
6. Other (specify)_____

6. Rate the level of helpfulness of each of the following while you were enrolled in a nontraditional program. (Circle appropriate number)

	Not Helpful	Helpful	No Contact
Individual counseling or discussion with supervisor	1	2	3
Talking with women apprentices informally	1	2	3
Talking with men apprentices informally	1	2	3
Formal, organized meetings with both men and women apprentices	1	2	3
Other (specify)_____	1	2	3

Please continue to last page ☛

7. What do you think you need from the nontraditional Single Parent/Homemaker Program to help you achieve your goals in a nontraditional field? (Circle the number of the 3 most important items.)

1. Assertiveness training
2. Financial information and assistance
3. Long-term career development
4. Nontraditional job placement information and assistance
5. Personal counseling/group support
6. Resume writing
7. Short term job skill training program
8. Testing for capabilities and interests
9. Other (specify)_____

Thank you

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